

Policy

AUGUST 2025



Advisory for Misconduct in Public



Daman Dev Sood

International Resilience Trainer & Consultant

Internal Advisory Note

Subject: Employee Conduct, Reputational Risk, and Managing Public Controversies

Issued by: <your competitive office/ officer>

Audience/ Applicability: All employees, All People Managers, HR Business Partners, Ethics & Compliance Team, Executive Leadership

Date: <Insert Date>

Background

Recent high-profile incidents in the corporate world have highlighted how even consensual relationships between senior leaders—especially when exposed in public or viral settings—can:

- Undermine internal trust
- Raise ethical questions
- Damage brand credibility
- Lead to operational instability

This advisory provides guidance on identifying, mitigating, and responding to such incidents, even when they do not meet the legal threshold of misconduct under laws such as POSH (India), EEOC (U.S.), or equivalents. <change according to your country>

Key Risk Scenarios Covered

This advisory applies to incidents involving (but not limited to):

1. Consensual relationships between company leaders or between a superior and a subordinate
2. Public exposure of executive conduct (e.g., viral media, live events, social media)
3. Perceived misuse of authority, favoritism, or reputational conflict of interest
4. Situations that may not be illegal but are professionally inappropriate

Policy Intent

To:

- Maintain integrity, transparency, and accountability in all employees
- Protect the company's reputation, workforce trust, and legal compliance
- Ensure swift, fair, and proportionate responses to reputational risks

Advisory Guidelines

1. Disclosure & Declaration of Relationships

- Employees must voluntarily disclose any consensual romantic relationship with another employee—especially if they are in leadership roles, there is any reporting line, or shared function.
- These disclosures are managed confidentially by a designated Ethics Committee or HR legal counsel <or equivalent in your company>.

2. Power Dynamic Sensitivity

- Even if a relationship is consensual, any imbalance in influence must be assessed.
- HR may restructure reporting lines or adjust roles to prevent perceptions of favoritism.

3. Public Incidents & Viral Exposure

- Any public behavior involving company representatives, if deemed inappropriate or reputationally risky, will trigger an internal ethics review—even in the absence of formal complaints.
- HR and Corporate Communications must prepare a joint rapid response protocol (messaging, leave decisions, stakeholder communication).

4. Interim Action

- If necessary, involved individuals may be placed on administrative leave to ensure objectivity and contain reputational damage.
- Leave decisions are not prejudgments of guilt but tools for procedural fairness.

5. Post-Incident Outcomes

- Depending on findings:
 - Voluntary resignation, reassignment, or exit through negotiated terms may be considered.
 - Public statements (if needed) will protect individual dignity while reinforcing organizational values.
 - Non-disparagement and confidentiality clauses may be activated, where applicable.

Confidentiality and Dignity

- All investigations and conversations will maintain strict confidentiality.
- The organization remains committed to respecting the personal dignity of individuals involved, regardless of outcome.

Role of HR, Managers, and Ethics Committee

Stakeholder	Responsibility
HRBPs	Identify potential risks; counsel employees; escalate early
Ethics Committee	Review declarations; advise actions in ambiguous cases
People Managers	Reinforce the importance of transparency and professionalism
Communications	Align messaging internally and externally during crises
Legal/Compliance	Ensure adherence to labor laws, POSH guidelines, and contracts

Learning & Culture Building

Post-incident, the organization will:

- Reinforce leadership accountability standards during training sessions
- Update onboarding and executive orientation to clarify behavioral expectations
- Encourage open discussion around professional boundaries and conduct

Key Takeaways

- Not all reputational risks stem from legal wrongdoing.
- Senior leaders carry an amplified responsibility in personal conduct.
- The company will balance ethical clarity, empathy, and procedural fairness.
- Transparency, discretion, and timely action are critical to maintaining workforce trust.

Questions or Disclosures?

For confidential concerns or voluntary disclosures, contact:

- <Insert Ethics Office Contact> or
- <Insert HR Legal Contact> or
- <as appropriate in your company>

Employee Rights & Support Mechanisms

While the organization is committed to upholding ethical leadership and public trust, it also recognizes the rights and dignity of every employee.

Employees involved in or affected by public misconduct incidents are entitled to the following support:

- Confidentiality Assurance

All disclosures, investigations, and proceedings will be handled with the highest degree of confidentiality, shared only with those directly responsible for resolution and support.

- Access to Counseling and Wellness Support

Affected individuals (including families, if necessary) may avail of professional counseling services through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or a designated support partner.

- Right to Be Heard

Every employee will be provided a fair opportunity to share their perspective before any decision is made. Procedural fairness will be ensured throughout.

- Appeal Mechanism

Employees may request a review of decisions or actions taken by submitting a formal appeal to <Ethics Committee Chair / Internal Review Panel> <change according to your organisation>, within 7 working days of the communication of outcome.

- Non-Retaliation Guarantee

Employees will be protected from any form of retaliation or prejudice for disclosures made in good faith or participation in investigations.

Note:

This advisory does not seek to police employees' personal lives or lawful conduct outside the workplace. However, in today's highly visible environment, personal actions can have professional and organizational consequences – especially when they involve public attention, leadership roles, or perceived conflicts of interest.

The intent of this policy is to safeguard organizational integrity, uphold trust, and ensure responsible leadership conduct when personal matters intersect with public and professional domains.



Daman Dev Sood

International Resilience Trainer & Consultant

**For
inquiries,
contact
me.**



www.damandevsood.com



daman@damandevsood.com



+91 9958091880

